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Axe-wielding Murder at Panmunjom



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Axe-wielding Murder at Panmunjom

Seoul, Korea

PRINTED
IN KOREA

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cover:

North Korean guards assault on UNC personnel during an unprovoked attack in which two Americans were brutally murdered at Panmunjom on August 18, 1976.

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Panmunjom: From truce talks to ax-wielding murder

Preface

A shocking incident occurred at Panmunjom, site of Korean truce talks, on August 18, 1976, in which tens of north Korean soldiers attacked outnumbered United Nations Command guards with axes and crowbars, killing two American officers and injuring nine Korean and American personnel.

The following day, August 19, north Korea's Kim Il-sung ordered his entire armed forces, regular or otherwise, into full combat readiness.

The provocations shed further light on the inhumanity and belligerency of the north Korean Communists. They expressly tell who is the breacher of peace on the Korean peninsula.

North Korea has betrayed the hope and expectations of all peace-loving peoples around the world and it deserves to be condemned for its barbarism and threat to peace.

Our U.N. Korean War Allies Association wishes to join all the people of the Republic of Korea in expressing deep condolences over the death of the two youthful officers slain in the brutal incident. We extend our sincere consolation to the bereaved families

We are convinced that the lofty sacrifice of the two officers must be rewarded with eventual unification, peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula.

1. Murder at Panmunjom

At about 10:30 a.m. August 18, five Korean workers, escorted by a United Nations Command security squad consisting of 10 American and Korean guards, arrived at the Joint Security Area of Panmunjom for routine trimming of trees. They picked a large tree near the United Nations Command Guard Post No. 3 and started trimming.

About 15 minutes later, at approximately 10:45 a.m., a group of 15 to 16 north Korean guards approached the scene of the trimming. For about 15 minutes, the north Korean guards stood by raising no objection to the trimming until another north Korean officer abruptly demanded that the trimming be stopped immediately.

A dispute ensued as the United Nations Command guards rejected the unreasonable demand of the Communists, and proceeded trimming. Here, the north Koreans sent for additional guards and about 20 north Korean guards reached the scene by truck in no time.

As they disembarked from the truck carrying clubs and crowbars in their hands, a north Korean officer was heard shouting, "Kill them." Soon the north Korean guards encir-

cluded the outnumbered United Nations Command personnel and began beating, clubbing and axing them.

When the cold-blooded and apparently premeditated attack was over, two American officers lay dead and nine other United Nations Command personnel were injured, some seriously.

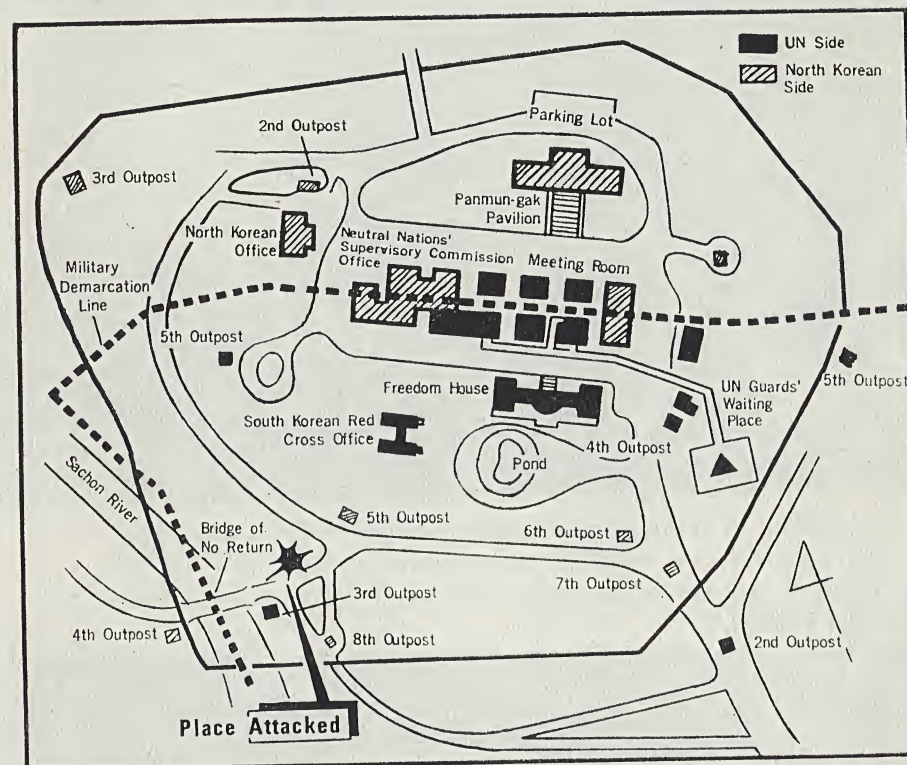
The two murdered American officers, later identified as Captain Arthur G. Bonifas, 33, Newburgh, N.Y., and 1st Lieutenant Mark T. Barrett, 24, Columbia, S. C., died from massive head injuries and stab wounds.

The brutal unprovoked attack occurred in an area within the Demilitarized Zone where free access and movement are guaranteed to personnel of both sides under the Armistice Agreement.

Also in the attack, the north Korean guards smashed three United Nations Command trucks which drove nearby to take the injured. They also ransacked the United Nations Command Guard Post No. 3 near the southern end of the Bridge of No Return in the Joint Security Area.

The following day on August 19, the Commander of the United Nations Command, General Richard G. Stilwell sent

Sketch Map of Joint Security Area



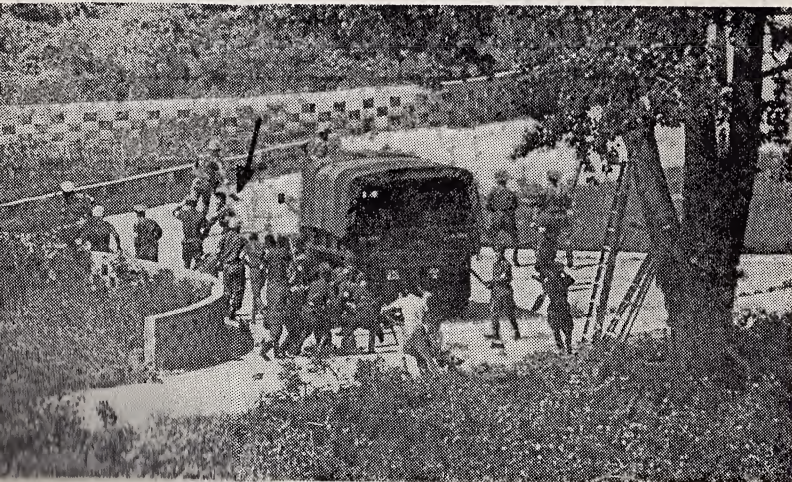
JOINT SECURITY AREA

Site of Military Armistice Commission Meetings

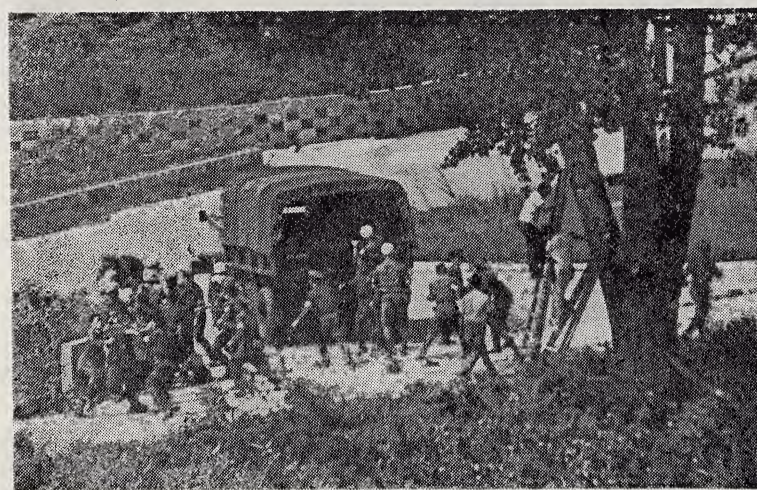
This map shows the location of the incident, near the Bridge of No Return, down left, inside the boundaries of the Joint Security Area which is under the joint control of UNC and north Korea (indicated KPA).



① A group of north Korean guards start a quarrel with their UNC counterparts while Korean workers are doing their routine trimming of trees in the area. Two workers are seen climbing down ladders.



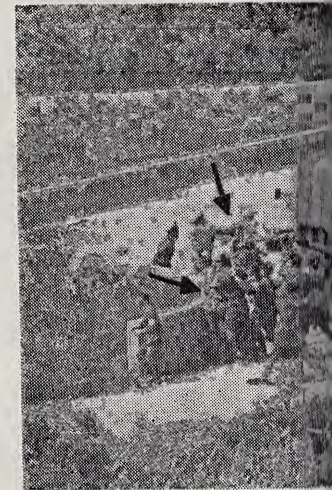
④ North Koreans wield clubs and axe (see arrow) as they go after UNC personnel running for safety.



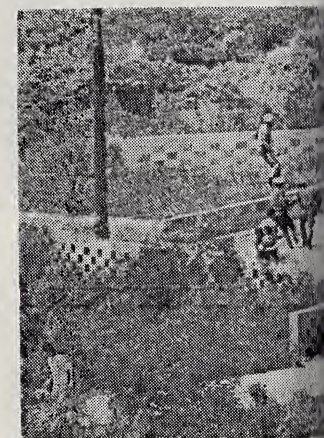
② Violence breaks out as north Korean guards in several groups assault on UNC guards at the shout "kill them" by a north Korean officer, which was apparently a pre-arranged go-signal to begin the brawl.



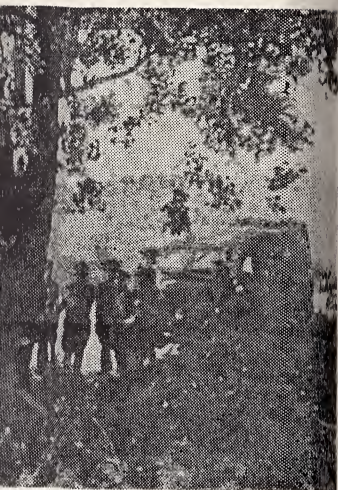
⑤ As the Korean workers flee for safety and look back over their shoulders, the beating behind the truck still continues. A UNC officer is seen surrounded by another group in front of the vehicle, as one north Korean guard behind him aims his axe at the UNC officer's head.



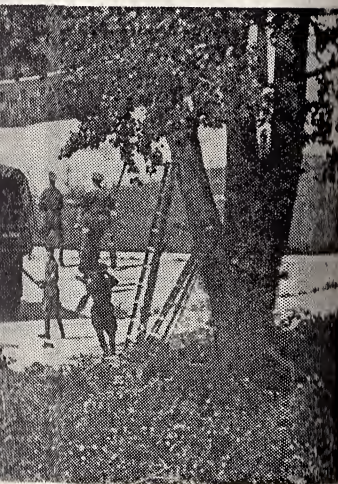
③ North Koreans cl scattering to escape th Behind the truck, a UNC officer.



⑥ A north Korean recoiling while more the truck. The help near the left front of



rt a quarrel with their
s are doing their routine
rkers are seen climbing



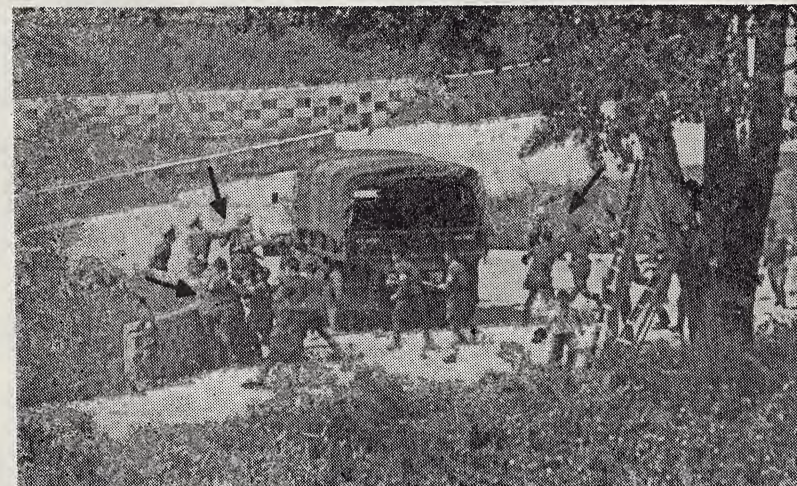
(see arrow) as they go



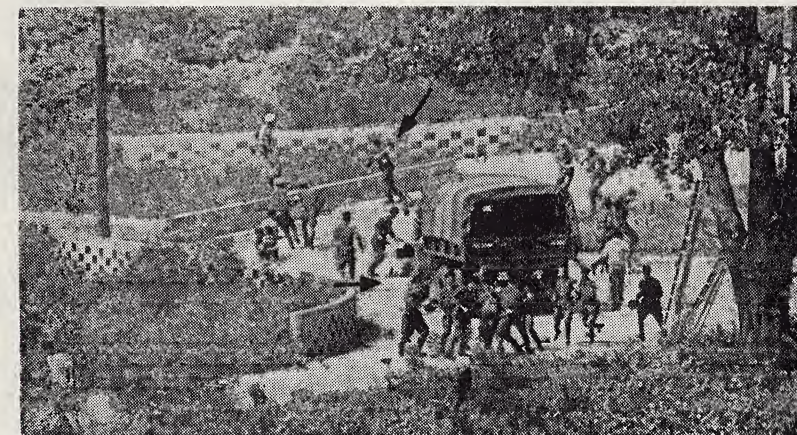
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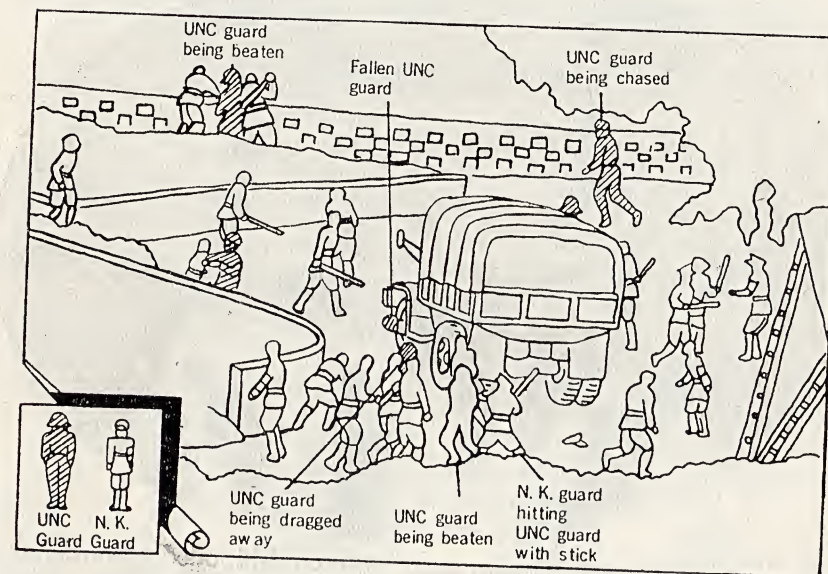


③ North Koreans chase and beat UNC personnel, who are scattering to escape the sudden mass attack by the north Koreans. Behind the truck, a group of north Koreans attack an unseen UNC officer.



⑥ A north Korean guard with an axe is going after a UNC officer recoiling while more of the north Koreans join the beating behind the truck. The helmet of the murdered UNC officer is seen near the left front of the truck.





On Aug. 18, the north Korean broadcast aired the reports about the Panmunjom incident, and this was what they insisted really happened.

"Around 10:45 a.m. today, the American imperialist aggressors sent in 14 hoodlums with axes into the Joint Security Area to cut down the trees on their own accord, although such a work should be mutually consented beforehand. Four persons from our side went to the spot to warn them not to continue the work without our consent. Against our persuasion, they attacked our guards en masse and committed a serious provocative act of beating our men, wielding murderous weapons and depending on the fact that they outnumbered us. Our guards could not but resort to self-defense measures under the circumstances of this reckless provocation."

And the pictures reproduced here show, sequence by sequence, what really happened and how deceptive and fictitious the north Korean broadcast and propaganda are.

The attack lasted for about 20 seconds, the UNC personnel by far outnumbered by the north Koreans. In this photo in these last seconds, the north Korean guards dominate the scene with violence after most of the UNC guards have disappeared.



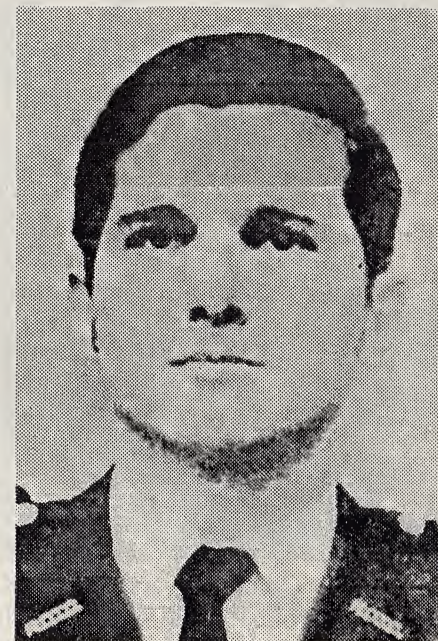
This is the north Korean guard who cold-bloodedly murdered a UNC officer with an axe during the outburst of violence.



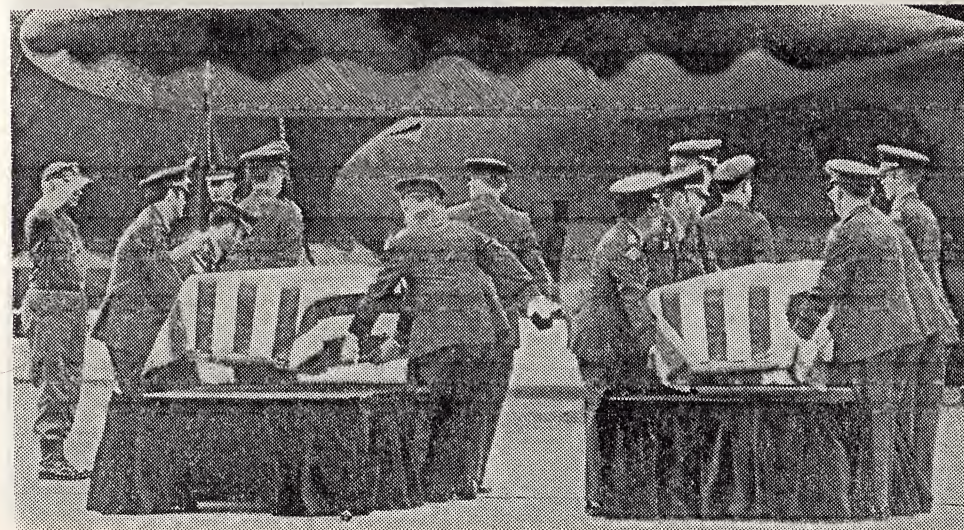
A north Korean representative at Panmunjom, showing the axe they had taken by force from the Korean workers and then murdered the UNC guards, insists that the axe was first used by the UNC side. The axe was presented during a Military Armistice Commission meeting held near the scene of the murder.



U.S. Army Major
Arthur T. Bonifas



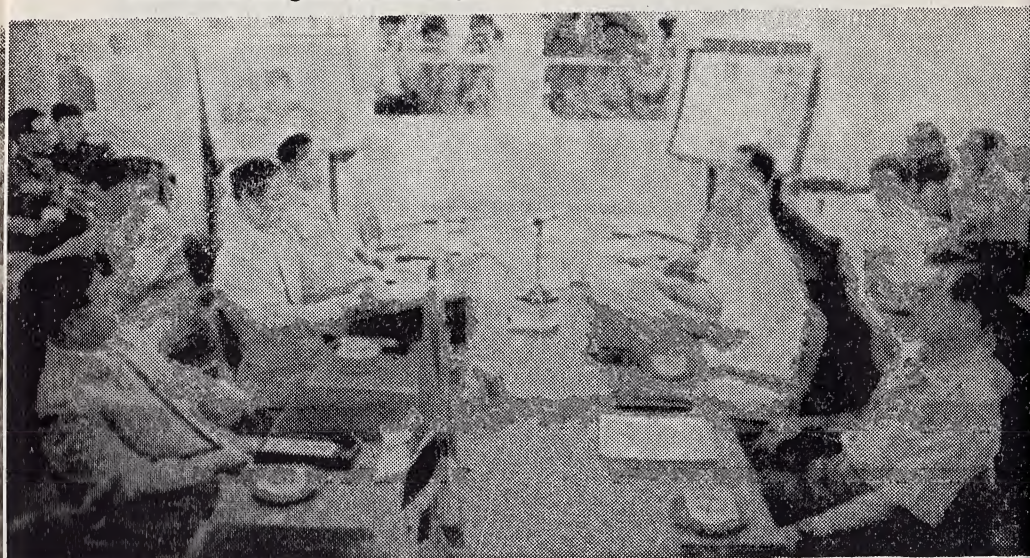
U.S. Army 1st Lt.
Mark T. Barrett.



The bodies of the two slain American officers, Army Maj. Arthur T. Bonifas and 1st Lt. Mark T. Barrett, are taken into a C-130 Hercules air transport carrier for return to the United States as UNC Commander Gen. Richard Stilwell salutes them off.



U.N. Command and north Korean security officers hold a meeting outside the truce meeting room at Panmunjom. The meeting lasted only 17 minutes as the north Koreans obstinately continued illogical reasonings.



The UNC representatives criticize north Korea at the plenary session for the murderous incident committed by the north Koreans. The north Koreans, seated at right, pretend nonchalant.

a strong protest to north Korea's Kim Il-sung against the murder of two American officers and the injury of nine other United Nations Command personnel.

The protest was verbally delivered to Pyongyang at the 379th meeting of the Military Armistice Commission held at Panmunjom at the request of the United Nations Command.

General Stilwell said in the protest, "The United Nations Command views this brutal vicious act with gravity and concern, and warns that such violent and belligerent acts cannot be tolerated. North Korea must bear full responsibility for all consequences of its brutal action."

The General emphasized that the incident not only jeopardized the entire framework of the Armistice Commission but violated the neutrality of the Joint Security Area as agreed upon by both sides.

General Stilwell noted in the protest that the United Nations Command personnel were attacked unmercifully by a numerically superior force which was wielding axes and clubs, adding that the United Nations Command elements were at the time engaged in "routine maintenance functions of a type north Korean personnel often perform."

2. Kim Il-Sung Orders Full Combat Readiness

The tensions that have been hovering ominously over the Korean peninsula entered a critical stage recently when north Korea's Kim Il-sung placed his entire armed forces in full combat readiness.

Acting in the capacity of commander-in-chief, Kim Il-sung ordered all north Korean military units, regular and irregular alike, into full combat readiness effective 5 p.m., August 19, 1976.

The official Radio Pyongyang and Central Radio of north Korea, monitored in Seoul, reported at 5:25 p.m., August 19 that Kim Il-sung had issued the special order of combat readiness. From that time on, the north Korean radio suspended regular programs to air Kim Il-sung's order repeatedly.

The order of combat readiness came 30 hours after the brutal killing of two American military officers under the United Nations Command and injuring of nine United Nations Command personnel by tens of axe- and crowbar-wielding north Korean soldiers in the Joint Security Area of Panmunjom.

The inhumane attack at Panmunjom and the subsequent military combat readiness order may point to the imminence of some sort of military action on the part of the north Korean Communists against the Republic of Korea. This is especially true in view of the north Koreans' avowed intention of "liberating" or communizing south Korea as well as their frantic efforts to build up military capability in preparation for another aggressive war.

It seems that the north Korean Communists might have reached the conclusion that an opportune time had finally come for them to take military action against the South.

Among possible reasons for such a conclusion are that north Korea feels the need to distract its people's growing concern and discontent with its economic failure and intensifying internal power struggle over the designation of Kim Il-sung's son, Kim Chong-il, as his heir.

Besides, the north Korean Communists are believed to be attempting to take over action against the south before the national strength of south Korea grows far superior to theirs. Another likely cause is that they seek to take advantage of the possible policy vacuum in the United States during the current presidential election period.

In fact, the atrocity at Panmunjom and the following military combat readiness order are considered to have been undertaken as a final stage in their carefully contrived scenario calling for escalated provocations and a military buildup culminating in outright military action against the South.

Intelligence reports indicate that during four years beginning in mid-1972, north Korea has built up its military capability drastically. The north Korean armed forces now comprise 560,000 regulars and 2,350,000 irregulars, all of whom were placed in combat readiness by Kim Il-sung's order on August 19.

The militias, trained and equipped nearly the same as the regulars, consist of the 260,000-man Guidance Corps, the 700,000-man Red Youth Guards and the 1,300,000-man Workers' Militia. Especially noteworthy is the existence in the north of 80,000 ranger troops skilled in limited, irregular warfare.

Their military hardware is no less impressive. Their sophisticated equipment includes 1,500 tanks of modern design, 12,400 artillery pieces, 460 naval ships including guided missile frigates, and 1,000 warplanes.

With these massive forces, the north Korean Communists

have lately taken yet more ominous steps: moving crack mechanized divisions to the forward area, and activating reserve airfields and building naval facilities in areas close to the truce line.

The incident in the Joint Security Area was only one of a number of premeditated provocations against the South, all aimed at heightening tensions and creating conditions for their outright military action.

Only 14 days before, on August 5, north Korean soldiers fired machine guns across the Military Demarcation Line at a United Nations Command observation post about 60 miles northeast of Seoul. The site of the firing was in the same general area where a north Korean underground infiltration tunnel—the second to be uncovered—was found on March 19 last year.

The shooting was timed with the north Korean Communists' abrupt claim on the same day, August 5, that "south Korean and American forces are preparing an invasion of the north."

A Radio Pyongyang broadcast monitored in Seoul claimed that "a new war is at hand due to provocations by the Korean and American forces... enemies have already prepared for war and are going to provoke a war."

On June 19, 1976, three north Korean intruders were found south of the Demilitarized Zone. Ensuing operations killed all of the infiltrators, and an examination showed that they had the mission of a sort of pre-invasion probe into the defense stance of south Korean military installations in the forward area. (See *"Renewed Threat from North Korea," Korean Overseas Information Service, July 28, 1976.*)

The August 18 incident aside, the truce site of Panmunjom had often turned into a scene of acts of the north Korean brutality.

On June 30, 1975, a dozen north Korean guards and pressmen assaulted American Army Major W. D. Henderson, a United Nations Command security officer in the Joint Security Area, injuring him seriously. He was trampled on by the north Koreans and suffered a fractured larynx before he was rescued by United Nations Command guards.

Major Henderson, now residing in Washington D. C. after undergoing treatment at the Walter Reed Army Hospital in the United States, commented upon learning of the recent axe-killing of two American officers that the atrocity must have been perpetrated with sanction from high north Korean authorities. Henderson said that during his service at Panmunjom he felt that north Korean soliders were trying to gain fame by harassing American personnel.

In another incident on March 5, 1974, more than 100 north Korean guards wielding sticks attacked some 30 American military policemen, inflicting injuries on five American personnel.

3. Analysis of the Events

North Korea's recent brutal and barbaric act of murder can be analyzed in relation to its political maneuverings as well as its military strategy to achieve its goal of unification by force of arms.

The political design of Kim Il-sung's aggressive scheme to communize the whole Korean peninsula consists of the following operational tactics with two goals. First, north Korea has used scare tactics by claiming that the U.S. is ready to launch an all-out war against it, and Kim Il-sung has emphasized that the U.S. is ready to use nuclear weapons. The next Korean war, he said, will expand to a Third World War.

Second, north Korea intended to manipulate American public opinion so that the majority of the American people would want to withdraw their forces from Korea because of the danger of another war.

In the area of international relations, the above-mentioned tactics were closely related to the Colombo conference of non-aligned nations and north Korea's draft resolution submitted to the forthcoming U.N. General Assembly. North Korea's assumption was that if it criticized the U.S. severely, it would get sympathy from the non-aligned nations at the Colombo

conference as well as at the United Nations.

To carry out its premeditated scheme, north Korea chose the timing carefully. The brutal act of murder took place when the American Republican Party was holding its national convention, and the Colombo conference of the non-aligned nations was under way at the time.

Having failed to create a favorable mood for north Korea, this time it decided to provoke Americans by committing an act of murder. North Korea wanted to see the U.S. get involved in its premeditated scheme of provocation to use it as ammunition for north Korea's all-out propaganda warfare.

The military side of Kim Il-sung's design has been limited war against the South. The possibility of limited war has been strengthened in recent years with the mounting problems of north Korea in the area of international trade and a domestic power struggle.

North Korea has been in deep trouble with its trade partners all over the world, and the estimated foreign debt amounts to 2 billion dollars. North Korea is under heavy pressure nowadays to repay its foreign debts, and it has been conspicuously silent about the failure of its six-year economic plan. And recently it was reported that there were numerous

revolts of the people demanding more food.

It is now an open secret that Kim Il-sung faces problems unprecedented since he took over power in 1945. To establish Kim's dynasty in north Korea, Kim Il-sung and his followers have been actively engaged in reshaping the power structure by appointing his son, Kim Chung-il, as a political heir apparent, and all Kim's family members have become national heroes. It has been widely reported that the dissidents to Kim's scheme have been systematically purged in recent months. It is a real possibility that north Korea might try a limited war to find a breakthrough in its domestic instability.

Another variable we have to consider in relation to the limited war is the instability of the major powers whose interests converge on the Korean peninsula. Japan is in turmoil to resolve its domestic problems, Peking is in the middle of shaping new leadership, and the U.S. is in an election year.

The recent brutal behavior of north Korea can be clearly understood based on the above-mentioned Kim Il-sung scheme.

The Republic of Korea, with a clear understanding of Kim Il-sung's tactics, has emphasized the ever-increasing threat from north Korea throughout the years although some

friends of Korea have minimized it based on their idealistic wishes. Recent north Korean activities simply have proved the validity of the Republic of Korea's genuine concern for its national security and the imminent danger from north Korea has demonstrated to the world that its "peaceful unification" means double-edged tactics to communize the whole of Korea: unification by force and social disorder by dispatching armed guerrillas and suicide commandos.

Facing the most serious danger on the Korean peninsula since the Armistice Agreement in 1953, it is time for peace-loving Koreans in the South to strive with firm determination to defend their country, and it is a logical conclusion that only strong determinations and strength can stop north Korea's aggressive scheme and maintain genuine peace in East Asia and elsewhere. As President Park Chung Hee pointed out, Kim Il-sung should take the full responsibility for future provocations.

It is also high time for the world to recognize that the Republic of Korea's effort to unite the country peacefully taking a step by step approach through dialogue is in direct contrast to Kim Il-sung's aggressive and inhuman provocations.

Appendix I Government Statements

Excerpts from Address of President Park Chung Hee at Commencement Ceremony at Third Military Academy, August 20, 1976

If the north Korean Communists ever again perpetrate unlawful provocations, small or large, we shall take retaliatory steps promptly. They must assume all responsibility for the consequences arising therefrom.

There is a limit to our perseverance. We see no reason why we have to swallow onesidedly their provocations. A club is needed to deal with a mad dog.

The north Korean Communists unsuccessfully sought to test our defense preparedness by infiltrating some armed agents a while ago. On last August 5, they machine-gunned one of our outposts inside the Demilitarized Zone. Two days ago, they launched a premeditated attack against United Nations Command personnel performing routine duty at the truce site of Panmunjom, killing and injuring some of them.

While they themselves have been absorbed in preparation

for an aggressive war, they spread unfounded falsehoods outwardly, claiming that we are preparing for a northward invasion just as in the case of a thief crying "thief."

These aggressive provocations and deceptive propaganda are mere schemes intended to cover up their people's growing discontent with their economic failure as well as internal power struggles, and also to shift responsibility to our side in the event they provoke an aggressive war against the south.

Special Statement by Government Spokesman,

Minister of Culture and Information

Kim Seong-Jin, August 19, 1976

North Korean Communist chieftain Kim Il-sung openly manifested his scheme to invade the Republic of Korea again by force of arms and thereby destroy peace in Asia, by issuing an order placing all regular and reserve forces such as the People's Army, the Workers' Militias and the Red Youth Guards in a state of combat readiness effective at 5 p.m. today.

The government and citizens of the Republic of Korea, together with all peace-loving peoples of the world, sternly urge Kim Il-sung, a maniac for war, to give up his scheme to wage another war and abide by the Armistice Agreement.

The north Korean Communists, who have been making totally unfounded allegations of "northward invasion" in their stepped-up, stereotyped deceptive propaganda, have intensified their aggressive provocations by brutally killing two American officers and injuring Korean and other American personnel under the United Nations Command who were engaged in routine duties in the Joint Security Area of Panmunjom.

The north Korean Communists, who were busy trying to shift the responsibility for the incident to our side without feeling any remorse of conscience just like the case of a thief crying "thief," have now ordered all regular and reserve forces to enter into a state of combat readiness.

The north Korean Communists have cunningly carried on aggressive provocations in accordance with a prepared scenario for war provocation for the purpose of reinvading the Republic of Korea by unleashing another war on the Korean peninsula.

The Korean people and all other peace-loving peoples in the world who are well aware of such stereotyped methods of the Communist north Koreans well foresee how north Korea will act in the next stage.

We urge north Korea to totally abandon its war plot, rather than to attempt to conceal the reinvasion scheme by such a foolish method.

If the north Korean Communists ignore such a warning and make a reinvasion of the south, they should bear in mind that it will bring about nothing but total destruction of north Korea.

In this connection, we strongly urge the north Korean Communists to give up their illusion of communizing the Republic of Korea by staging a provocative war on the Korean peninsula as well as destroying peace in Asia.

Through their brutal acts at Panmunjom and Kim Il-sung's order to enter into a state of combat readiness, all the peace-loving peoples in the world must have come to realize clearly that it is none other than the north Korean Communists who indulge in war provocations on the Korean peninsula.

Now is the time for all our citizens to unite with one another and take thorough measures against possible reinvasion by the north Korean Communists, while all peace-loving countries should unite with one another solidly and cooperate in the efforts to thwart war schemes of the north Korean Communists.

**Statement by the Spokesman for the Ministry of
Culture and Information**

August 18, 1976

The government of the Republic of Korea is enraged at the barbaric and inhuman act of murder committed by a group of north Korean soldiers in the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, and denounces this unbelievable barbarism in the name of all peaceloving peoples around the world.

This incident clearly reveals that the north Korean Communists are so deeply involved in preparation for a renewed conflict on the Korean peninsula that they have become irrational, and also shows what atrocious mobsters they are.

We are watching this premeditated provocation with grave concern, and we pay special attention to the fact that this brutal provocation took place during a time when north Korea was actively engaged in groundless propaganda of "northward" threat by the south.

On this occasion, the Republic of Korea government strongly urges the north Korean Communists, who have violated the Armistice Agreement on numerous occasions, to abandon their acts of aggression immediately and faithfully

abide by the Armistice Agreement and other mutually agreed principles of the South-North Joint Communiqué. The Republic of Korea government also urges the north Korean Communists to respond to its peace efforts accordingly.

The Republic of Korea government extends its sincere condolences to the two victims of the United Nations Command and their bereaved families, and prays for the quick recovery of the injured soldiers of both the United States of America and the Republic of Korea.

This tragic incident should teach us how to protect our country from threats of north Korea and we should stand firm to defend our country with strong determination. The alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States should be further strengthened to take all precautions against another aggression by the north Korean Communists.



North Korean reporters pick a quarrel with Maj. W.D. Henderson, a UNC security officer, sitting on an outdoor bench during the 364th Military Armistice Commission meeting on June 30, 1975.



Three north Korean guards assault on Maj. Henderson, one holding him in back.



Maj. Henderson lies unconscious, seriously bruised by north Korean guards.

**Appendix II Protest Statement by UNC Senior Member
at 379th Military Armistice Commission Meeting,
August 19, 1976**

The CINC United Nations Command has ordered me to pass a formal protest to the supreme commander of the Korean People's Army. Yesterday, an unprovoked act of severe hostility was initiated by members of the KPA security force against the UNC security force in the Joint Security Area. This incident of most grave consequences was an open and flagrant act of belligerency by the Korean People's Army resulting in the death of two UNC security officers. This incident not only jeopardized the entire framework of this Commission but it violates the neutrality of the JSA as agreed upon by both sides in July 1953, as well as all internationally recognized conventions in regards to Armistice Agreements. Never before in the twenty-three years since the ceasefire was formally signed has there been the outright and brutal murder of JSA security force personnel. This was not the eruption of an unplanned argument. It was the deliberate murder of two UNC personnel who, engaged in routine maintenance functions of a type your personnel often perform, were attacked unmercifully by a numerically superior force, wielding axes and clubs. I ask your assurance

that an incident such as this will not occur again. General Han, I want your assurance that you will pass this protest to your Supreme Commander as expeditiously as possible.

I will tell you the facts surrounding this incident and I am telling you now that I do not intend to debate them or discuss any irrelevant subject. Direct your attention to the photos on my left and the chart on my right. At approximately 10:30 hours yesterday morning, a UNC work crew arrived in the vicinity of our checkpoint east of the Sa Chon Bridge. The work party consisted of five Korean laborers who were accompanied by three UNC officers and a seven-man security force. Their purpose was to prune the tree indicated in the photo to my left. This tree hindered observation between two of our checkpoints and pruning it was a routine maintenance task, posing absolutely no threat to your side.

Shortly after our work crew began, two of your officers and approximately nine of your enlisted men drove up in a truck and got out. One of your officers began a discussion with the ranking UNC officer and asked him what he was doing. When the UNC officer explained that the work party was pruning trees, your officer indicated that this was "good." The work continued for 10 or 15 minutes and some of your personnel even engaged in trying to instruct our workers how the tree should be pruned.

At approximately 10:50 hours, your officer told the UNC officers to stop the work. There followed a discussion between the officers of the two sides during which your officer threatened our personnel. Our officer, performing a peaceful mission and within his prerogatives, directed our personnel to continue working. At this point, your officer tried to direct the work force to stop working. The UNC officer again indicated the work would continue and your officer sent a guard across the Sa Chon Bridge. His mission was evidently to call for reinforcements, for within a short period of time additional KPA guards arrived both from within the JSA and from the west side of the Sa Chon Bridge until there were approximately 30 of your personnel in the area. You will recall the UNC had approximately 10 security personnel in the area.

Now I want you to listen very carefully to what is said, and to pay close attention to the photographs. Your officer took off his watch, wrapped it in a handkerchief and placed it in his pocket. Another of your officers rolled up his sleeves. Our senior officer was busy with the tree pruning detail and did not see this. Immediately thereafter your officer approached our officer and, crying "kill," struck him knocking him to the ground. Five of your other personnel jumped on him while he was down, continuing to beat him. Either in response to the order to "kill" or because your officer has started a fight, your other personnel immediately and savagely

turned on the remaining UNC personnel and axe handles began to appear among your personnel.

This unprovoked assault surpassed in brutality even your attack on Major Henderson last year. In no way could the pruning of trees, a routine maintenance activity, be considered either hostile or provocative—and yet your guards took the very axes meant for peaceful uses and turned them into instruments of death.

The United Nations Command views this brutal and vicious act with gravity and concern and warns the north Koreans that such violent and belligerent acts cannot be tolerated. North Korea must bear full responsibility for all consequences of its brutal actions.

Appendix III World Press Reactions

Daily Telegraph, London, Aug. 20

“North Korean Axemen”

Kim Il-sung lost no time in ordering a combat alert throughout north Korea after his troops had hacked two American officers to pieces with axes in the truce zone. The whole affair is typical of this megalomaniac Communist dictator and comes as a reminder that he could send the area up in flames again as he did in 1950. Ever since that war ended his dominating obsession has been to prepare north Korea militarily and psychologically for the forcible reunification of the country.

The latest attack is just one of an unending series of incidents designed to test American reactions and to provide an excuse for escalation if deemed opportune.

True, some comfort can be drawn from the assumption that China and Russia, Kim's backers and armers, have an interest in restraining him... Yet Kim, who has been in control since 1948, although still only 64, is believed to be ill and is certainly impatient to complete what he sees as his life's work... South Korea deserves more support than she gets in her efforts to meet the internal and external threats

from her vicious neighbor. A most inopportune uncertainty has been caused by the statement by Mr. Carter, the American Democrat presidential candidate, that American ground forces should be phased out and that America's commitment should be reconsidered.

Le Monde, Paris, Aug. 19

"Cause For Concern"

At Panmunjom, two U.S. Army officers were killed by north Korean guards armed with axes and metal pikes. President Ford was the first one who stigmatized the north Korean government attitude, saying that north Korea must accept the total responsibility and consequences of the vicious and unprovoked murder of the U.S. officers in the neutral zone. On the other hand, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger officially warned the north Korean authorities: "We will hold the north Korean authorities responsible for all consequences of the bloody incident at Panmunjom." Finally the State Department considered this incident as an important violation of the 1953 Armistice Agreement. Having rejected the north Korean argument, the United States does not exclude the possibility of its resorting to arms to resolve the differences. Lately incidents at the Demarcation Line in Korea are on the increase. But it is the first incident in the last 23 years

since the Armistice that violent death took place in the Joint Security Area.

New York Times, New York, Aug. 19

"Pickaxe Diplomacy"

North Korea's die-hard Stalinist government has stooped to a new low in barbarism with the apparently premeditated axe-murder of two American officers at the Panmunjom cease-fire village.

The regime of president Kim Il-sung may hope by its brutal act to build support for recent suggestions in this country for a gradual phase-out of some 40,000 American ground troops still stationed in south Korea. The effect will be exactly the opposite—to strengthen the argument for a continuing strong United States presence in Korea to help preserve the truce in the face of such evidence of persisting aggressiveness from the north.

It is also possible that the Panmunjom atrocity was designed to provoke an extreme American retaliation—a retaliation that in turn would rally sympathy for the north Koreans at the "non-aligned" conference in Sri Lanka and support for the north Korean prime minister's request that the conference demand withdrawal of all United States troops and nuclear

weapons from south Korea. Both Washington and the non-aligned nations should surely be trusted to have better sense than to fall for such an inhumane and primitive ruse.

Japan Times, Tokyo, Aug. 20

According to the UNC, a small work unit engaged in trimming trees in the Demilitarized Zone south of the "Bridge of No Return" was attacked by north Korean guards. Two U.S. army officers were killed and nine Americans and south Koreans were injured.

Pyongyang lost no time in blaming the American troops for the incident, calling it a "provocative action" for which the north Koreans had "no recourse" but to take "defensive measures." While the responsibility for the clash could be fogged over by counter-charges, it does serve to prove the north Korean charges made in their statement to the Colombo conference and in the resolution sent to the UNGA that tensions are high and the danger of a new war is present on the Korean peninsula.

The killing of two American officers will doubtlessly have serious repercussions in the U.S.. The north Koreans are surely aware of this, but they could be counting on the incident to strengthen the view that American forces should be

withdrawn from the Republic of Korea.

The clash, involving U.S. soldiers, could also be utilized by the pro-Pyongyang nations at the U.N. to whip up support for their new resolution whose centerpiece remains the removal of the American deterrent force from Korea, despite the additional demands that have been included.

The ROK government and the nations supporting its interests in the U.N. had anticipated that the submission of the pro-north Korean resolution would follow the conclusion of the Colombo conference. They were thus surprised that it was proposed while the non-aligned nations are still conferring. More than that, however, they had hoped that the "unproductive debate," which last year saw the travesty of two conflicting resolutions gaining approval, would not be repeated this year.

But they now have no other choice but to follow with a resolution of their own, representing the ROK position. It is expected to chiefly stress two points—the request for a speedy resumption of the dialogue between north Korea and the ROK on peaceful reunification and the call for an early conference among the nations directly concerned to revise the present Armistice Agreement or to supplant it with a new arrangement so that the UNC can be disbanded.

There can really be no substitute for frank and open talks between Pyongyang and Seoul. The tragedy is that north Korea continues its refusal to confer with the Park Chung Hee government. This year's pro-Pyongyang resolution gave a sign of flexibility by stating that reunification must be undertaken by the Korean people themselves. But this hope was dashed by the speech made by north Korean premier Park Sing-Chul at Colombo who reiterated his government's position it will deal with the U.S. but not the ROK.

But it is self-evident that the settlement of the Korean problem on a peaceful basis can come only with the participation of the ROK. Pyongyang is obviously taken with the example of Hanoi's maneuvers of holding exclusive talks with the U.S. to gain its withdrawal from South Vietnam to pave the way for military conquest.

Seoul, however, is not Saigon. And the situation of the Korean peninsula must not be likened to that of Vietnam in the past.

New York Times, New York, Aug. 19

"Violence Can Flare Quickly At The
Front Line In Korea"

The immediate area around Panmunjom, where two

American soldiers were killed yesterday has been the scene of so many violent incidents since the armistice that ended the Korean War 23 years ago. It is the only part of the Korean peninsula still officially designated a combat zone by the United States.

The American soldiers serving at Panmunjom actually have very little protection.

Their standing orders are to take pictures first of any incident for official documentation.

All of the United Nations Forces' guardposts at Panmunjom are built within sight of one another, a sort of structural buddy system for mutual protection.

Many of the incidents seem to be connected with propaganda campaigns of north Korea, which is experiencing severe financial difficulties in meeting its overseas debts. On Aug. 5, the same day that the Pyongyang radio announced a full military alert in the north, the United Nations Command said a north Korean guardpost opened fire on a south Korean post several dozen miles east of Panmunjom.

This week at the meeting of non-aligned nations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, north Korean officials have been telling

other delegates that an invasion of their country by south Korea was imminent.

South China Morning Post, Hong Kong, Aug. 19
"Ambiguity Of Marshal Kim"

When the UN General Assembly unprecedentedly adopted two contradictory resolutions on the Korean question last year, it was hoped that it would induce the leaders of the two rival governments to reach some accommodation that would contribute to an eventual solution.

Nothing of the sort has happened, and for the continued stalemate the north Korean regime of Marshal Kim Il-sung is wholly to be blamed.

It has persistently and, indeed, falsely, implied in its propaganda exercises that the pro-Pyongyang resolution was the only one that was endorsed by the General Assembly and, therefore, the one that should be respected and implemented.

The pro-Seoul resolution had called on all parties directly concerned (the United States, south Korea and north Korea) to initiate negotiations leading to the dissolution of the UN Command and arrangements to maintain the 1953 Armistice.

The pro-Pyongyang resolution also called for the phasing out of the UN Command but declared that negotiations for a new accord to safeguard peace must be by 'the real parties' to the 1953 Armistice Agreement, meaning only the U.S. and north Korea.

The ambiguity of north Korea is clearly reflected by the fact that on the one hand it is willing to deal with the south on all issues relating to the future reunification of the divided country provided, of course, all alien forces are withdrawn, while on the other, it calls for the exclusion of Seoul in talks to maintain the armistice.

It has also spurned Washington's suggestion for four-power (the U.S, China and the two Koreas) talks to replace the UN Command with a new peace-keeping arrangement.

Pyongyang has now got its friends to bring up the Korean question again at the forthcoming annual session of the General Assembly with a resolution that, in essence, calls for the dissolution of the UN Command and the withdrawal of all American forces and their equipment from south Korea.

However, north Korea's behavior during the past year should awaken those third world and so-called non-aligned countries which have blindly supported Pyongyang to the fact

that all the sabre rattling on the Korean peninsula has been done by Marshal Kim. A recent study in depth of the Korean situation by the Independent Institute for the Study of Conflict concluded that the marshal's irrational ambitions were the main threat to the existing precarious truce.

The resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly will serve no purpose unless Pyongyang reverses its position and agrees to negotiate a new peace-keeping arrangement prior to the dissolution of the UN Command, which is presently the main guarantee for peace.

Arbeiterzeitung, Vienna, August 20

"No War In Korea"

After World War II, three countries were divided into Communist and non-Communist parts. After 30 years of bloodshed, Vietnam is once again united under the banner of sickle and hammer, the two Germanies have found a more or less normal *modus vivendi*—there is no acute danger of war in this part of the world—and only relations between the two Korean countries continue to be strained. War was waged there from 1950 to 1953 and at present new tension arose after events on Wednesday which led to the murder of two U.S. officers by north Korean soldiers.

The Republic of Korea south of the 38th parallel has made great economic progress with U.S. aid.

The Korean People's Republic in the north which is building a modern industry is now faced with great difficulties over paying back foreign debts and is ruled by a regime which with its cult of personality and its expansion of a family dynasty beats even the worst Stalinist period.

A 20-meter gold statue of the great leader, genius of the revolution, outstanding thinker and legendary hero Kim Il-sung, the sun of humanity, dominates the picture of Pyongyang. Whereas Stalin used to tolerate pictures of Marx, Engels and Lenin next to his own, in north Korea there is only the picture of the head of state to be seen and only his works are obtainable in bookshops. Because he is ill, his son Kim Chong-il is being built up as his successor.

Similar to Ho Chi Minh, whose human qualities he does not possess, Kim Il-sung, 64, who has ruled since 1948, thinks he has to reunite his divided country. Although only Chinese "volunteers" saved him from losing the war he had started in 1950, his ambition to conquer south Korea remains unchanged. But south Korea has twice as many inhabitants and on top of this U.S. troops are stationed there, ready to use nuclear arms if need be.

Therefore underground tunnels are built below the de-

marcation line, where troops can be infiltrated, commandos are sent to the south and of the 16 million inhabitants, three million are continuously armed and ready for war.

A war in East Asia would be the last thing the U.S. and humanity could do with in 1976. Although Moscow and Peking have certain reservations towards north Korea and although China welcomes the presence of U.S. troops in Asia, war once started could expand to other parts of the world. The death of the two Americans is extremely regrettable but it would not justify a war, where hundreds of thousands or people would lose their lives.

Die Presse, Vienna, Aug. 20

“Axes Against Aggressors”

“Could a routine felling of trees be an imperialist aggression and provocation? Could it result in 30 guards overpowering a dozen people and murdering two of them with axes and iron bars, a fact which is kept secret by the north? The presentations of the incident by Pyongyang and the U.N. Command are in blatant contradiction. It is aggravated by the fact that the attacked, including the two murdered American officers, were in charge of guarding the demilitarized zone and to impede the outbreak of a new war, a task entrusted to them by a world forum. The world is in distress

now and is more inclined to believe the explanation of the U.N. Command. These events will very much shake the belief in the words of the ‘great and beloved leader Kim Il-sung’ on his ‘desire for peace’ which were published in the Western press in the form of advertisements which must have cost the underdeveloped country a small fortune.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Bonn, Aug. 20,

“Anti-Imperialism Campaign Has Been Lasting For Some Time”

The serious incident at the demarcation line at Panmunjom is the present peak of an intensive anti-imperialism campaign of the north Korean Communists which started some time ago. No day passes on which Pyongyang’s propaganda does not point to the acute danger of a military attack from the south. Head of state Kim Il-sung justified his absence from the summit conference of the non-aligned countries in Colombo with the argument that the critical situation at the Korean borders did not allow him to leave his country at this moment.

The official north Korean news agency recently analyzed the aggravation of the situation in Korea in a detailed commentary. It states that “the situation today reminds of the eve of June 25, 1950, when America started its aggressive war in Korea”

Every moment a new war could break out, the north Korean Communist organ writes. "If however a war starts in Korea it could easily turn into a war of global dimensions." Similar formulas have also been presented by the north Korean representative at the summit meeting in Colombo.

The party paper "Nodong Sinmun" also dealt with the causes of the alleged danger of war. "The American imperialists are running amok at this time," it writes. "They try by all means to light the match for an invasion of the north." The commentator in this connection points to the visit of the chief of the general staff of the American armed forces in the Pacific, Admiral Gayler, which he had paid to south Korea recently. According to the north Korean party paper this visit was meant only to serve the "preparations for the invasion of the American imperialists."

The reason for the start of a war hysteria in north Korea must be seen in the first place as an attempt to put more emphasis on the continuous demands from Pyongyang for the retreat of the American troops from south Korea. It is not by accident that this campaign started shortly before the beginning of the meeting of the non-aligned countries in Colombo. More edging and provocation has to be expected in order to heat the Korea debate at the UN in autumn in Pyongyang's sense.

Of course it cannot be excluded that the north Korean

Communists are still aiming at more dangerous goals with their recent agitation campaign. This on one side results from the fact that economically the situation in north Korea is deteriorating, and internal political tensions have arisen, on the other hand the north Korean leaders gradually fall into international isolation.

Hong Kong Standard, Hong Kong, Aug. 21

"Towards The Brink"

War cries have begun to reverberate once again on the Korean peninsula following Wednesday's killing in Panmunjom of two American army officers by the north Koreans. In the last three days the leaders of north Korea, south Korea, and the United States have issued many statements and orders to make the tense situation in Korea increasingly volatile.

North Korean soldiers as well as the 600,000 south Korean troops and the 42,000 U.S. troops stationed in the south have already gone into alert in preparation for war. In addition the U.S. has moved into south Korea a squadron of F4 Phantom jets from Okinawa. Another squadron of F111 fighter-bombers from Ohio are on their way to south Korea as part of the U.S. effort to beef up the Park Chung Hee's regime war muscle and present a formidable challenge against north Korean moves.

All these have pushed the tension on the Korean peninsula towards a point from where all-out warfare is only a step away.

Indeed the wanton action by north Korea against the U.S. army officers at Panmunjom is the immediate provocation for all this. It may provide some sort of a justification for the U.S. to pump its troops into the Korean peninsula where it fought a futile war 23 years ago. American lives may appear, perhaps, convincing to the Ford administration, especially in this election year.

While the need to prevent any north Korean belligerence cannot be minimized any serious attempt to protect American lives in Korea as well as to ease tension on the Korean peninsula needs to be directed towards the root cause of the Korean problem rather than the immediate provocations.

In May of this year, we breached the subject in an article entitled: "Reason to the unity of Korea." We have pointed out then, the diversity in the positioning between the north and the south. On the one hand, the desire on the part of people governed by Seoul to attain a speedy reunification; on the other hand, the same intransigence of the present moment. It is clear that the internal picture of the peninsula is the same. The fears of the last months are still active in the spirit of today. Pyongyang executed an action that was expected. In Sri Lanka he attempted a wave of pressure. Everything points

at a failure in such an effort. The feelings which dominate the Asiatic countries, from the People's Republic of China onward; that is, the politics of non-intervention, in no way strengthens it in geopolitical terms. What remains perhaps, then, is the Soviet Union as a support for an aggressive action. But this is a daring hypothesis.

The Korean question, which had reached a stage of extreme vulnerability, has now become a grave question. The death episode of the two American soldiers was not yet completely cleared up. To advance in considerations regarding the subject is to walk on a ground filled with doubt and delusion. The best tactic is to await for the detail.

In a scale of precision, if both the points for and those against are taken into account, it would be clear that south Korea, despite the presence of American soldiers—today an almost symbolic force—won the cause.

Seoul, over the years of liberation, particularly after the bloody war of 1950, sought purely development-oriented objectives and has reached them, as shown by its gross national product. It became a territory for free transit. At this point, with more consciousness of the solidity of its economy, the reaction capacity of those who embrace NES jurisdiction, it wants to extend itself throughout the world, search for a

broadening in the area of relating with other countries, including the Popular Republic of China.

The presence of American soldiers in its territory is a personal resolution, a decision belonging to the acts which guarantee its safety. What are, for instance, the differences between the presence of Americans in south Korea and their presence in the Federal Republic of Germany?

It is known that this is not the only nation to have its body cut in half by an imaginary political line separating ideological blocks. Like the others, however, its greatest aspiration regards the recovery of its unity. The Korean case, however, differs from the others in that it is specific. The nations desire reunification, they want it. But something prevents them from reaching their common objective.

In Park Chung Hee's proclamation we will find an explanation when he requests urgency from the Communists of the north to abandon once and for all the absurd and anachronistic phantasy of communizing Korea through the force of weapons, and to return as soon as possible to the arena of dialogue so that it may be possible to gather all efforts in order to dissipate the state of tension in the Korean peninsula and restore mutual confidence.

The reason why the man from Pyongyang, Kim Il-sung, is

not affected by the appeals directed to him is not well known. He appears monolythical and unshakeable. The word dialogue must sound like a menace to him. When his colleague Park Chung Hee speaks in order to invite him to join in a peaceful revolution, a revolution of democratic ideals, the answer is always an act of violence; the incident now registered might have been the consequence of the appeal for reunification dated the 15th. Who knows?

Correio Braziliense, Brasilia, Aug. 20

"Corea In State Of Alarm"

It is impossible to avoid the subject which so imposes itself. The reference concerns the incident between Americans and north Koreans right on the dividing line of the two Koreas which are apparently irreconcilable due to ideological motives.

Adding to international concern, this distant spot of the Asiatic geography seemed to attract with a mysterious force the attention of everyone. On the one hand, It was known that the government of Pyongyang prepared an offensive against Seoul using as field for action the third world conference in Colombo. On the other hand, something mysterious lingered in the air.

Five days ago, on the 15th of this month, therefore, Presi-

dent Park Chung Hee, in commemoration of the 31st anniversary of national liberation in an announcement "Dear 55 million compatriots of the South and North," renewed his appeal for national reunification.

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